

FRESNO, CA — Today, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced a \$260 million investment in California's water infrastructure. Following that announcement, Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) released the following statement:

"Secretary Salazar's visit to the Valley was a critical trip. I am sure he saw the challenges faced by those who rely on the Delta as a source of water. While I am thankful for his desire to visit and see firsthand some of California's challenges, it appears that the Department of Interior's priorities, as they emerged in today's announcement of infrastructure projects for California, ignore the critical needs of an important segment of California's society and economy, namely the central San Joaquin Valley.

"The federal investment of \$260 million California's water infrastructure is a step in the right direction to help our state's water challenges. Our water system was built over fifty years ago, and has not kept up with the state's population increases. Any federal investment in water infrastructure must provide adequate water for farms, for cities and to ensure the health of rivers, lakes, and streams, but that investment must be balanced. In light of the economic devastation now taking place in the central San Joaquin Valley due to critical water shortages, it was hoped that the Department of Interior would dedicate a balanced portion of the stimulus funding towards projects that would afford the operational flexibility for providing a reliable supply of water to meet the needs of our distressed communities.

"Today's announcement, however, is very disappointing in that it does little to help our farmers and farm workers in the next six to twenty-four months, should we continue to experience ongoing dry circumstances. The major portion of projects identified is focused on fisheries and environmental projects, and neglects the human needs. Many towns in my district are experiencing Depression-level unemployment due to a lack of water for our farms right now. What is unclear is how the identified projects address these real human needs.

"I will continue to press President Obama, Secretary Salazar and my colleagues in the House of Representatives to use all the powers and discretion the federal government has to bring more water to our region. Finally, I would ask once again the President and Secretary Salazar to personally visit the central San Joaquin Valley and see firsthand the misery this water crisis is evoking."